

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-23 are currently pending. Withdrawn Claims 25-101 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1-14 and 19 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 2-13 were objected to as being directed to an apparatus instead of a “server apparatus”; Claims 1, 8-12, 14, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 7,130,068 to Ohta (hereinafter “the ‘068 patent”); Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘068 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,130,921 to Goodman et al. (hereinafter “the ‘921 patent”); Claims 4, 17, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘068 and ‘921 patents, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,915,096 to Rosenzweig et al. (hereinafter “the ‘096 patent”); and Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘068 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,542,892 to Cantwell (hereinafter “the ‘892 patent”).

Applicants respectfully submit that the objections to Claims 2-13 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims. Claims 2-13 have been amended to recite a “server apparatus.” Accordingly, the objection is believed to have been overcome.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a server apparatus, comprising: (1) a first sharing unit that shares a print environment thereof with other apparatuses on a network, wherein the first sharing unit includes a connection management unit that manages, in response to a print reservation by a user, the connecting of the first sharing unit to a second sharing unit of a second server apparatus on the network, the second server being selected based on acquired

route information; and a transfer unit that transfers of the print reservation, the acquired route information, and a document related to the print reservation to the second sharing unit of the second server apparatus for routing to a print server connected to a printer identified in the information of the print reservation. The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.¹

The '068 patent is directed to a method and a print server apparatus for notifying the end of printing to a client computer in an asynchronous manner for a print job that cannot be reserved in the print server. As shown in Figure 1, the '068 patent discloses a server 101, client computers 102-104, and a network printer 105 connected to a network 106. Further, as shown in Figure 6, the '068 patent discloses that the server 502 includes a reservation job manager 512, a job list 516 as well as a reservation job 515. Further, the '068 patent discloses that the client 501 includes a reservation job transmitter 509 and a registry 511. Figures 12 and 13 of the '068 patent describe the process for reservation job transmission and reservation job management.

Further, as noted by the outstanding Office Action, column 6, lines 60-64 disclose that "...as the print server only manages the order of printing, there is not required a large spooler, and, because of the lighter load of processing, one of the clients may be used as an imaginary print server instead of providing an exclusive print server on the network (LAN)." In this regard, Applicants note that the '068 patent discloses that the client spools print data and the client itself sends the print data to the network printer when the order of printing is reached, and that the print server merely manages the order of printing. Thus, the '068 patent states that, instead of having a stand-alone print server 502, one of the other clients 102-104 shown in Figure 1 could be used as a print server instead.

¹ See, e.g., Figure 1 and the discussion related thereto in the specification, in particular, page 21, lines 11-24.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '068 patent fails to disclose the second server having a second sharing network recited in Claim 1. The passage disclosed in column 6, lines 60-64 of the '068 patent is not a disclosure of two servers, as implied by the Office Action, but is a disclosure that the functions of the server 101 could be performed instead by a client 102-104, since the operations of the server are merely to manage the order of printing and each client actually does the spooling. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that this passage in the '068 patent, rather than implying a second server, implies that even one stand-alone server might not be necessary.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '068 patent fails to disclose a connection management unit that manages, in response to a print reservation by a user, the connecting of the first sharing unit to a second sharing unit of a second server apparatus on the network, the second server being selected based on acquired route information, as recited in amended Claim 1. As discussed above, the '068 patent does not disclose the connection to a second server, and does not disclose routing information.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '068 patent fails to disclose a transfer unit that transfers information of the print reservation, the acquired route information, and a document related to the print reservation to the second sharing unit of the second server apparatus for routing to a print server connected to a printer identified in the information of the print reservation. In a non-limiting example, as shown in Figure 1, Applicants note that a print reservation entered by a user at a web server 1 to a server A1 can be routed, for example, to the second server B-2, for printing on the printer P-3-1 via the print server PS-3. Applicants respectfully submit that the '068 patent is silent regarding transferring information of a print reservation, acquired route information, and a document to a second server for routing to a print server connected to a printer identified in the information of the print reservation, as recited in Claim 1. Rather, the '068 patent merely discloses a print server, a

client, and a network printer on a network. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 (and all similarly rejected dependent claims) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Independent Claims 14 and 19 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1 and have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 14 and 19 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims.

Regarding the rejection of dependent Claims 2-7, 13, 15-18, and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), Applicants respectfully submit that the '921, '096, and '829 patents fail to remedy the deficiencies of the '068 patent, as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of the above-noted dependent claims are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claims 1, 14, and 19.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 14, and 19 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '068, '921, '096, and '829 patents.

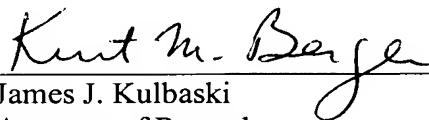
Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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